

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Teddy's "Bears"

- Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Grade Level: 9–12 (classification, art, and analysis)
- Objectives: The student will:
- Classify selections of political cartoons about Theodore Roosevelt
 - Revise a classic cartoon with new ideas from diplomatic documents
 - Create comic strips to represent the diplomacy of President Roosevelt
 - Reflect on the importance of the Root–Takahira Agreement in regard to Open Door policies
- Time: 2 class periods
- Materials: Documents: **1907** *The Threat from Japan*
1908 *The Root–Takahira Agreement*
- Resources: Photograph of President Theodore Roosevelt
A Series of Theodore Roosevelt Cartoons
<http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com>
Teddy's "Bears:" The Things that Kept Him Growling
Textbooks
Plain drawing paper and colored pencils

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

With his oversize personality and distinctive features, Theodore Roosevelt was a cartoonist's dream, but he was also well-qualified for diplomacy and foreign affairs. Unlike many of his contemporaries, TR had traveled to the Middle East and Europe as a child and young adult and had fought in the Spanish-American War. When's TR's Secretary of State, John Hay, resigned due to ill health, TR even acted as his own Secretary for several months until a successor was in place.

In a complete break with the presidents of the later 19th century, the United States under Roosevelt was a major player on the international scene. He mediated the conflict between Russia and Japan in the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905); an accomplishment for which TR became the first American to win a Nobel Peace Prize.

Roosevelt became something of an expert in Asian affairs—and their effects on US domestic politics. He realized that the Japanese were emerging as a major international power and saw potential conflicts with American interests on the horizon. In 1907 he sent the "Great White Fleet" to visit Asian ports-of-call to create "salutary" feelings.

In this lesson, students will reinterpret Roosevelt's diplomatic initiatives and have fun recreating his story. They will also be asked to assess whether he accomplished what he set out to do—and whether it was good for the country.

Pre-Lesson

1. The night before the lesson, direct students, as homework, to find cartoons of Teddy Roosevelt that are different from the ones in their textbooks. Students should bring one—on any topic they find interesting—to the next class session.

Note: Some students will find cartoons that feature the “Teddy” bear. Research the story of the Teddy Bear’s creation to use in class discussion.

2. Print out the *Photograph of President Roosevelt* and put one on each student’s desk.

Day One

1. Ask students to get out cartoons they brought to class.

2. Have students decide what their cartoons are about and classify the selections into topics (this will take some time for whole class to do.)

3. Put the cartoons in folders with the major topic on the outside and spread the folders out on a table or desk so that all can have access.

4. Consult the textbook for descriptions of President Roosevelt’s years as President and especially review the achievements of the peace conference that led to his Nobel Peace Prize.

5. Share with students some of the special stories, quotes, pictures, etc. that a teacher normally collects. Be sure to tell the story of the origin of the Teddy Bear.

6. Distribute plain white drawing paper along with the exercise, *Teddy’s “Bears”: The Things that Kept Him Growling*

7. Then hand out *TR Cartoon A* and *TR Cartoon D*.

8. Ask students to choose one of the “Teddy’s Bears” categories and create a comic strip of at least four frames related to the topic chosen. Students may use the caricature in *TR Cartoon D*. Use color in the comic strip, and include a bear somewhere.

9. Display *TR Cartoon C* and *TR Cartoon E*.

10. Students may look at cartoons in the folders for inspiration.

11. Allow the rest of the class period to finish the comic strip.

13. Collect the finished comic strips and post around the classroom for tomorrow’s lesson.

Day Two

- 1.** Comic strips are posted and while class comes in suggest they all walk around the classroom and see what each classmate has created.
- 2.** While they are walking and looking and talking (which is ok) put the document, *The Threat from Japan*, on each desk, plus *TR Cartoon F* (Piling It On), and the version of cartoon F with the blank sticks.
- 3.** When students return to their desks ask them to read the letter Roosevelt sent to Philander C. Knox. Direct them to use the letter to fill in the blank sticks. Roosevelt is "Piling It On" the new administration by giving them instructions on how to proceed, disguised as advice. Print as neatly as possible on the sticks.
- 4.** When finished ask the students to write 3-5 sentences describing what Roosevelt is saying in this document.
- 5.** Now hand out the document, *The Root-Takahira Agreement*, and ask students to focus on four points:
 - a.** What does this short document omit?
 - b.** Why would the country would criticize Roosevelt for this agreement coming into play?
 - c.** Just what does *status quo* mean to an open door policy of the government?
 - d.** Do you think the appearance of the Great White Fleet created the tone for this agreement? Why or why not?
- 6.** There is room on the bottom of that document for students to write their answers. Ask them to include one final sentence about their view of President Roosevelt as a warrior or a peacemaker.
- 7.** Have students share their answers and collect the revised "Piling It On" cartoon.
- 8.** Post all the student work and incorporate cartoons and ideas in the next test.

Extension Activities:

- 1.** Have students choose a cartoon from their original research that they did *not* bring and have them write an explanation.
- 2.** Have students create new cartoons using the face of Roosevelt.
- 3.** Have students create an animated cartoon about Theodore Roosevelt and his diplomacy. ■